

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

The following document is provided by the
LAW AND LEGISLATIVE DIGITAL LIBRARY
at the Maine State Law and Legislative Reference Library
<http://legislature.maine.gov/lawlib>



Reproduced from scanned originals with text recognition applied
(searchable text may contain some errors and/or omissions)

SEVENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

SENATE

NO. 28

In Senate, Jan. 24, 1917.

Came from the House referred to the Committee on Military Affairs, and on motion by Mr. Hastings of Androscoggin laid on the table for printing pending reference in concurrence.

W. E. LAWRY, Secretary.

Presented by Francis M. Langley.

STATE OF MAINE

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD ONE THOUSAND NINE
HUNDRED AND SEVENTEEN

RESOLVE, appropriating money for the erection and equipment of a State Armory for the use of the National Guard in the City of Lewiston.

Resolved, That there be, and hereby is appropriated the
2 sum of eighty thousand (\$80,000) dollars for the year 1917
3 to be used for the erection and equipment of an armory
4 building in the city of Lewiston for the use of the National
5 Guard of the State of Maine in said city, provided the city
6 of Lewiston furnish a suitable lot or site for said armory
7 acceptable to the parties herein designated and deed same

8 to the State of Maine upon the passage of this resolve;
9 or when required by the commission herein provided for;
10 said sum to be expended for the above purposes by a com-
11 mission of five citizens of the city of Lewiston to be ap-
12 pointed by the Governor subject however to the supervision
13 and direction of the State Armory Commission to whom
14 said building shall be turned over for the benefit of the
15 state as aforesaid upon its completion and acceptance.

Reference is hereby made to the report of the State
2 Armory Commission presented to the 78th Legislature of
3 the State of Maine in conformity with an act passed by
4 the 77th Legislature, namely Chapter 179 of the Public
5 Laws of the State of Maine, approved April 1, 1915.

STATEMENT OF FACTS.

To the Seventy-eighth Maine Legislature:

Chapter 179 of the Public Laws of the State of Maine, as passed by the 77th Legislature, provided that "the Inspector-General and Charles H. Osgood of Lewiston are created a commission with power to act under the direction of the Adjutant General and in conjunction with the State Armory Commission to determine the feasibility of erecting armories at Lewiston and in other parts of the state at the expense of the state; to inquire into the probable cost of the same; to inspect such plans as may be submitted to them in connection therewith and to gather such information as may be obtained, and report the results of their investigations to the next Legislature."

The foregoing was approved on April 1, 1915, and in accordance with its provisions the undersigned beg leave to submit the following report:

The conditions under which the officers and men of the National Guard and the property in their care are housed in Maine, are such that with the exception of the city of Portland it is apparent that there is urgent need of improvement. Other methods have been tried without success, and it appears that the only satisfactory solution of existing conditions will be had through the erection of state armories at state expense.

Outside of the city of Portland there is not today a single armory with facilities for caring for the property of the companies occupying them, if raised to the required war strength. There is every probability of loss ensuing from fire or theft, a loss which the state will be required to make good if the property is issued by the Federal Government. Such surroundings as now exist in nearly all of the armories of the state, besides being insufficient to care properly for the property housed therein, are also such as to have a marked effect for the worse upon the securing of recruits for the various companies which make up the National Guard.

After careful consideration of the subject and study of existing conditions, looking also toward the changes which are already in view in regard to the National Guard, we recommend that a system of state-erected and state-maintained armories be inaugurated in Maine. We further recommend that during the present year an armory be erected at Lewiston at state expense.

Lewiston at one time was the greatest military center in the state. It maintained four companies and interest in the work was keen among the soldiers enrolled therein. Probably the greatest factor in the change which has taken place is the lack of suitable armory facilities. The city of Lewiston, although it has since increased materially in population, can now support but two companies; and it is difficult to maintain two companies under present armory conditions. The present accommodations there are far from satisfactory. The Lewiston armory is not sanitary, is poorly lighted and heated, and is considered unsafe. The city officials have tried for years to provide a better and more suitable armory, but have been unable to bring about the much needed improvement.

The city is willing and anxious to assist the state in the erection of an armory there. The city has already provided a well-located and suitable lot, 100x200 feet in size. The city government has already voted to give this lot to the state, the only condition being that the state build an armory thereon. The lot, according to prevailing real estate values there, is worth from \$15,000 to \$20,000, and is well suited for the proposed purpose.

Under the direction of this commission and at its suggestion tentative plans for a Lewiston armory have been prepared by Architect Coombs of that city. The proposed structure will cover practically the entire lot and will be a model of convenience and efficiency for the purpose for which the building is intended. If this armory is erected, it will be occupied by the two companies of the Coast Artillery Corps now located in Lewiston. Upon its completion the Federal Government will equip the building with the latest guns and accessories, at a cost to the Federal Government of from \$100,000 to \$150,000.

Under a Federalized National Guard, the troops are to be used by the state for riot, invasion, fire and flood. At the

same time the troops are to be fully supplied and equipped by the Federal Government. All that is required of the state is that it provide suitable places for armories and that proper care be given the Federal equipment and property. In the near future Federal property valued at from \$600,000 to \$800,000 is to be landed here, and the state will be held strictly accountable and responsible for its safe keeping, including losses from fire, theft and other causes. Suitable storage facilities are lacking.

The minimum size of the companies composing the National Guard is now 65 men. On June 30, 1917, this will be increased to 83 men and on June 30, 1918, will again be raised to 109 men. It is evident from the foregoing figures that present armory accommodations have to be increased substantially before June 30, 1918. This increase provided for by the Defense Act of June 3, 1916, calls for steady increase in the membership of that portion of the National Guard to be furnished by the State of Maine. On June 30, 1917, a strength of 1800 enlisted men is required, with increase each year until 1922 as follows: On June 30, 1918, the strength required is 2400 men; on June 30, 1919, 3000 men; on June 30, 1920, 3600 men; on June 30, 1921, 4200 men, until the maximum strength is reached June 30, 1922, 4800 men.

While there is crying need of armories in many places in the state, it is evident that all cannot be relieved during the present year. This commission in considering this matter, decided that the city of Lewiston should first be supplied on account of being the second city of size in the state; that the needs of the city of Bangor along the same lines then be cared for, with other localities in the state to receive subsequent attention. The policy of state-built armories is now the practice of many of the states in the Union and is working out well. Of the New England states, such a policy has been adopted by Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and the latest addition to the list is Vermont.

In determining the kind of building which this commission would recommend for erection in the city of Lewiston, plans of similar structures were studied which have been constructed in Ohio, Pennsylvania, Washington, New York and Massachusetts. The tentative sketch adopted for recommendation and prepared by H. S. Coombs of Lewiston, architect, calls

for a two-story building with suitable locker, storage and assembly rooms, together with a commodious drill hall. The building as contemplated, practically fills the entire lot offered by the city of Lewiston. The entrance on the first floor opens into a lobby from which open rooms for officers, quartermasters, also reading and reception rooms. From a corridor in rear of the lobby, entrance is had to the locker rooms on either side and at the end is reached the big drill hall, 75x100 feet in size. Each side of the building is arranged as a duplicate of the other to house in substantially the same way both of the companies it is planned will occupy the structure. There is ample room for guns and equipment, even when the companies are raised to full war strength.

On the second floor there are officers' quarters, rooms for the non-commissioned officers and company rooms, together with card and reading rooms and ample toilet facilities. A gallery at one end of the drill hall gives a view of the entire floor.

In the basement in addition to the boiler and bunker rooms, are kitchens, dining room, storage quarters, rifle range and bowling alley. Provision is also made for the base for the big gun or mortar which would be installed by the Federal Government. The total estimated cost is \$80,000.

By installing Government equipment, the same as is now used by the soldiers in the regular establishment, soldiers of the National Guard will receive practical instruction. In the Coast Artillery Corps it is necessary that the men receive technical training in a high degree. Not only must they be fully conversant with the theory of their craft, but also they must have practical knowledge. This latter is secured only by actually accomplishing the things taught. If such an armory were erected at Lewiston, the Federal authorities would install a mortar with the accompany plotting boards and electrical equipment. The members of the companies would become fully and thoroughly familiar with the use of these, not only in theory, but in practice. In case of a call to service, the companies would be in readiness to be removed at once to a coast defense work and there would become without further training a reliable and efficient force to man such defenses. The importance of the Coast Artillery Corps to Maine with its long seaboard and with its good harbors offering a tempting mark

to any possible invader is apparent. So long as the prevailing opposition to compulsory military training prevails, so long will the safety of the state have to depend upon the National Guard as the only available reserve. To make this available force really efficient it must learn in advance of the day of need the duties it will be required to meet. To obtain this necessary training, armories fully equipped with the appliances of the craft are a requisite. There now appears to be no way to secure these much needed armories, with the great good their acquisition will produce, except by state erection at state expense.

Respectfully submitted,

JAMES L. MORIARTY,
Major, Inspector-General.

CHARLES H. OSGOOD.
ALBERT J. STEARNS,
Member of Armory Commission.